

Minutes
Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Special Joint Meeting with City of Newton Board of Aldermen
Monday, February 11, 2002, 4:30 p.m.

Newton, City of

Special meeting with Board of Commissioners

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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in special session with the City of Newton Board of Aldermen on Monday, February 11, 2002, 4:30 p.m., at the Catawba County Government Center, second floor meeting room, located at 100 A South West Boulevard, Newton, North Carolina.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce Board Members and Aldermen, review county services provided to the City of Newton and other cooperative ventures between the County and Newton, and discuss other issues of common interest. There was no action taken by either board at the meeting.

Present from the County were Chairman W. Steve Ikerd, Vice-Chair Marie H. Huffman, and Commissioners Katherine W. Barnes, and Barbara G. Beatty.

Absent: Dan A. Hunsucker.

A quorum was present.

Also present were County Manager/Deputy Clerk J. Thomas Lundy, Deputy County Manager Steven D. Wyatt, Staff Attorney Debra Bechtel, and County Clerk Thelda B. Rhoney.

Present from the City of Newton were Mayor Wayne Dellinger, and Aldermen Tim Elliott, Al Gaither, Roy Johnson, Bob Mullinax, Tom Rowe, and Revonda Seitz.

Also present from Newton were City Clerk Rita Williams, City Manager Ed Burchins, and Assistant City Manager Glenn Pattishall.

Chairman Ikerd called the special meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Mayor Dellinger introduced Newton's two new board members Bobby Mullinax and Al Gaither.

Mayor Dellinger said they had two issues of concern: 1) Budget shortfall and 2) Development of 321 Corridor and the land on Highway 10 from the present city limits out to Road 1008, better known as the road that goes to the landfill. They are working on getting an option on approximately 500 acres. They would like for the planning departments to work jointly on a plan that would work best for the City of Newton and Catawba County.

City Manager Ed Burchins said they would like to see a small area plan for that area. He said they would be running sewer to that area. He said the County had done a lot of good work in that area and Newton would like to join the County in future work. They plan to eventually annex voluntarily.

Commissioner Ikerd said the County's policy on water has not changed and the Commissioners assist cities based on the availability of funds. After property is annexed it is removed from County zoning.

The Commissioners agreed it is imperative to work with municipalities on planning issues within Catawba County.

County Manager Tom Lundy offered to City Manager Burchins that the planning staffs could get together and look at different or higher level zoning in the area and bring recommendations back to both boards for consideration.

Chairman Ikerd said a planned unit development along the 321 corridor would offer good development.

Mayor Dellinger said they were working on a plan to develop a greenway for the City of Newton and were interested in putting the greenway across the County's sewer right-of-way. Chairman Ikerd said that would be a win-win situation.

Commissioner Beatty recommended that Newton share the information about the greenway with the Balls Creek Small Area Plan which will be meeting in March.

Mayor Dellinger said everyone was interested in the widening of Highway 16 and would appreciate any support from the County. Chairman Ikerd said that is also a goal of the Commissioners.

Chairman Ikerd said due to budget shortfalls the Commissioners are committed to working with Newton as well as all cities in Catawba County. In terms of waterlines it will always be according to the availability of funds.

Mayor Dellinger said there are several thousand acres that could be developed into residential and commercial along the 321 corridor and the Startown Road area with the addition of water and sewer. They have water to the landfill and their board will need to discuss future services to the area.

Chairman Ikerd said the County would be having another school bond referendum.

Commissioner Barnes said a citizens advisory committee has been appointed to study school needs as well as options available for funding and will be reporting back to the three school boards, CVCC board, and the Commissioners. Budget issues will be the largest and she asked how much more could be cut before cutting services? She said CVCC is in need of a new library with double or triple the current size. The committee will be looking at the minimum and maximum requests of each school system.

The Newton Aldermen asked about the Small Area Plans. The Commissioners explained the small area plans are areas of the county such as Mountain View, Sherrills Ford, St. Stephens, Oxford, and Balls Creek and that a group of citizens from that area advise what they want in their area. Startown, Plateau, and Catawba will become future small area plans. The Commissioners found that citizens in the county want parks in their areas.

Chairman Ikerd mentioned the need for a wastewater treatment facility in the southeastern part of the county. The county does not need to be in the sewer business but could partner with cities to provide sewer services to the citizens. He said some citizens requested sewer even if it meant a tax increase and several businesses on Highway 150 closed because they could not get sewer. After the county looked at the possibility or need to supply sewer they received a lot of opposition. Currently, the project has been tabled.

The Newton Aldermen asked what FORESIGHT was being charged to look at. Commissioner Barnes said to work toward economic vitality for the county but they have not formalized the areas they will study.

Chairman Ikerd said over the years the county has changed as well as the cities in the county.

Alderman Gaither said they had six members on their board and Hickory had seven members. He asked why the county only had five members. The Commissioners said the statutes state that counties have a minimum of three members. More counties have five members than any other number.

Commissioner Beatty asked about First Responders and emergency services. Mayor Dellinger said their fire department employees are not first responders but they do assist. Their firemen are cross-trained. Alderman Rowe said they need to revisit their emergency procedures.

Commissioner Rowe said it is important to him that they have two sources of water supply. The dam for their water source is old and needs replacing and they may need assistance with funding.

Chairman Ikerd said funding depends on the decisions by the governor. Mr. Ikerd said the Commissioners will work with cities to run waterlines if there is available funding. The county does not get involved with how cities handle their water policies. Mr. Ikerd said there were a lot of cuts in the current budget and that \$1 million was transferred from the water and sewer fund to emergency services.

Mayor Dellinger asked about sewer to Balls Creek School. Deputy Manager Steve Wyatt said the county had received some state funding and staff is working on a proposal and are looking at options for Balls Creek such as gravity lines or pressurized lines. Utilities and Engineering Director Barry Edwards said a contract is presently being drafted to go to Newton because there are more gravity lines in that direction. Comm Scope is not part of the grant but the school and surrounding area is.

Mayor Dellinger said Barringer Subdivision has about 100 lots and a pump station there would take care of everything north of Highway 16 and west of Balls Creek School Road and south of the landfill. Mr. Edwards said the design would take care of the subdivision if the property owners or developer ever decided to come into that pump station but there are no lines leading to that pump station in that direction.

Commissioner Beatty said she was part of the new RPO which is Catawba, Maiden, and rural Catawba County and if Newton had any suggestions about Highway 16 she invited them to bring their suggestions to her for presentation to the committee.

Chairman Ikerd said he appreciated meeting with the Newton Board of Aldermen and that the Commissioners were partners and wanted to work with them and support them through the County staff.

Mayor Dellinger thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to talk with them.

At 5:30 p.m., there being no further discussions to come before the Board, Commissioner Ikerd made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

W. Steve Ikerd, Chairman
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Thelda B. Rhoney
County Clerk